

Independent living specialist Blackwood celebrates fiftieth anniversary

A pioneering independent living specialist is celebrating its 50th year of helping disabled and older people in Scotland to live longer, healthier, independent lives.

Since 1972, [Blackwood](#) has been providing specialist homes and services aimed at maximising independent living – with innovation being a key driving force.

Now Blackwood, which has services across 28 local authority areas in Scotland, will be hosting a bumper calendar of activities, events and projects for staff, customers, stakeholder and the wider community during 2022.

Julie McDowell, Blackwood's Board Chair, said: "As an organisation our purpose is to help people live independently and we invest in innovation to make sure we can help people to benefit from new technology developments so that they can have choice and control over how they live.

"To celebrate our remarkable half century, we'll be looking back to see how far our service has actually transformed – which is going to be exciting – as well as providing a blueprint for Scotland for the next fifty years so that our population can live longer and more independently.

"We'll also be paying tribute throughout the year to Dr

Margaret Blackwood who played a significant role in revolutionising independent living for disabled people.

“It will be great to engage with customers, staff, stakeholders and communities while we celebrate this milestone”.

Activities ongoing throughout the year include community events, bucket list challenges, podcasts and many more.

With the pandemic limiting social interaction over the past two years, Chief Executive Fanchea Kelly, is looking forward to bringing the Blackwood community together.



Fanchea Kelly

The celebrations kicked off with World Physical Activity Day and the ‘Let’s Move Together’ event to encourage customers and staff to move more and increase physical activity. The event was made up of online and in person activity sessions, including tai chi, virtual flash mob dancing and ping pong.

She said: “This is an incredibly big milestone year for Blackwood and one we are looking forward to celebrating with our entire community.

“Throughout the year we will be hosting a variety of activities and events – there will also be lots of projects to celebrate our history and how we contribute to shaping independent living in the future.

“There is a lot of exciting work underway at Blackwood which will come to fruition this year. That means we will be able to increase our capacity to meet the growing needs of local people in the communities where we operate. With that said, our first priority will always be our existing residents and the quality of the services they receive.

“The housing and care sector has gone through a tremendous change since we started, especially with advances in digital technology. We want to ensure Blackwood is at the forefront of what the next 50 years will bring.”

The charity’s vision has remained consistent with what founder Dr Margaret Blackwood set out years ago – “helping people live their life to the full”.

Dr Blackwood was a campaigner for the rights and independence of disabled people while raising awareness about a lack of suitably adapted homes.

Today, Blackwood continues to invest in innovation to develop a modern standard for accessible homes, combining technology, modern construction, and engagement with people who live with a disability to design and produce beautiful, easy to use homes.

Expertise as a specialist independent living provider, and a values driven approach ensures quality and value for customers is extremely high and that Blackwood is a great place to work.

Technology modernisation has seen the installation of a digital care system, CleverCogs alongside the launch of the bespoke “Blackwood House”, which is a cutting-edge design combining technology and modern construction to meet

customer's changing needs.

[Blackwood](https://www.blackwoodgroup.org.uk) operates more than 1500 properties across 28 local authorities in Scotland, helping transform its customers' lives on a daily basis at a time when funding is becoming increasingly tighter.

For more information, please visit:
<https://www.blackwoodgroup.org.uk>

